

Poem by Richard U. Rosenfield

Mourning In America

Calm, azure skies, a glistening skyline punctuated by twin-peaked symbols of might and pride, herald another morning in New York, in Washington and all across America

And then, in stunned disbelief, human intention, fueled by hatred and destruction, robbed us of our safety, robbed us of our innocence as shock waves of unimaginable terror assaulted our senses, collectively drawing us into countless repeated images, on countless screens, and endless coverage of the day the sanctity of America's freedom was breached and lay in rubble

Numbed disbelief is merely nature's way of buying time to absorb the enormity of chaos, destruction and loss, time to absorb the rush of heightened vulnerability, time to check with loved ones anywhere close to harm's way, just to hear a reassuring voice, a tangible sign of hope, in the face of unimaginable terror and despair leaving in its wake, hearts heavy with grief for those lost in a new kind of war, as we breathe a collective sigh of tentative relief, not knowing what forms of terror are yet to come

Slowly, the government speaks, with attempts at reassuring words and solemn resolve that our nation will remain steadfast and strong: and all across America, the people respond with displays of solidarity, flags flying with well-springs of pride, candle-lit vigils and prayer, and all manner of solidarity and collective reflection as all huddle a little closer to absorb the enormity of the shock wave that our national life will change in ways yet to unfold

Not in anyone's lifetime has seemingly foreign-based acts of war been unleashed so extensively on the heart of America's soil; this is not remote like Pearl Harbor but close at hand. New York and Washington, symbols of our prosperity and strength; the aim is

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not conquest of territory; it is an attempt at conquest of spirit, our spirit, our beliefs, our way of life spurred on by those for whom we are the very incarnation of evil and threat to fundamentalist beliefs

And so they have struck a blow for their beliefs, that the mighty enemy can be brought to its knees, that its commerce and freedom of movement can be disrupted and even curtailed; and lurking in the shadows is the eruption of fear, bubbles burst that somehow life will be changed and for this loss, perhaps transcending the loss of life itself, for this loss, as the reality sinks in, we must all endure the day America mourned, and as each new day dawns, we must pause and remember, that we must not take our freedoms for granted, for each day, it is indeed morning in America.